Unit .04

Bonus Session

The Prince of Peace

Scripture

Isaiah 9:1-7

1 Nevertheless, the gloom of the distressed land will
not be like that of the former times when he humbled
the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in
the future he will bring honor to the way of the sea,
to the land east of the Jordan, and to Galilee of the
nations. **2** The people walking in darkness have seen
a great light; a light has dawned on those living in
the land of darkness. **3** You have enlarged the nation
and increased its joy. The people have rejoiced before
you as they rejoice at harvest time and as they rejoice
when dividing spoils. **4** For you have shattered their
oppressive yoke and the rod on their shoulders, the
staff of their oppressor, just as you did on the day of
Midian. **5** For every trampling boot of battle and the
bloodied garments of war will be burned as fuel for the
fire. **6** For a child will be born for us, a son will be given
to us, and the government will be on his shoulders.
He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. **7** The dominion will be
vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on
the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish
and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now
on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will
accomplish this.

Intro Options

Main Point:
Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who brought salvation to the world.

Option 1

To *anticipate* means *to wait with expectation*. Students anticipate the coming of summer and the end of the school year. We anticipate the first snow, or maybe dream of a "white Christmas." We anticipate graduations, weddings, one-days and maybes. We wait with expectation to attend a concert or meet our favorite artist. We send announcements, cards, invitations, and save-the-dates. In the same way, Isaiah's prophecy of the coming king would cause His people to wait with expectation, to anticipate His arrival. A prophecy was a message from God, given through a prophet about a future event. Prophecies often declared judgment but some, like Isaiah 9, foretold of good things to come. In this case, the prophecy wasn't just about a good thing, rather it was about the coming Messiah—the ultimate and long awaited King.

- **What are some events you anticipate attending or people you anticipate seeing? How does that compare to your anticipation of Jesus' return?**

Option 2

Have you ever heard the phrase, "It was worth the wait?" People use this to talk about a trip, or an item they were able to purchase, or even the view at the end of a strenuous hike.

- **What are some things you've waited for?**
- **Were they worth the wait? Why or why not?**

Although we likely don't always think of it this way, we also wait for peace. We wait for peace when we're at odds with a friend. We wait for peace when we feel stressed out about school or just about life in general. We wait for peace in the world around us, as it often seems to be falling apart.

People in Isaiah's day were also waiting for peace. Specifically, they were waiting for peace in a Person. They were waiting for the promised King, Jesus. He is called the Prince of Peace for a reason. He brings peace between us and God when we trust in Him for salvation. He brings peace between us and others when we obey His Word and relate with them the way we should. One day—a day we're still waiting for—He will bring peace to the world. He will restore and He will rule over it in His perfect righteousness. His peace is always worth the wait.

TEACHING PLAN

Read Isaiah 9:1-3.

Isaiah's formal birth announcement of a Prince of Peace begins here in verse 2. The people may have been walking in darkness at the moment, but that would not last. They would see a great light. Throughout the Old Testament, darkness is frequently used to describe prison or death (Job 17:13; Ps. 107:10). Both descriptions were fitting for God's people in Isaiah's day. They had suffered from affliction and observed injustice under the violence of foreign enemies; therefore, they lived just like those living in the underworld where people only hoped for freedom from the chains of the underworld.

- **What "dark" situations have you walked through? How did God bring "light" in those times of darkness?**

However, Isaiah pointed the people toward the horizon. There, breaking through the darkness, was a light. With this light would come the hope of a new day, marked by the birth of the royal child. Just as darkness is used in Scripture as a metaphor for captivity and death, light is a symbol for the salvific presence of God Almighty. God had not forgotten or forsaken His people. Salvation would come, but it would not come from an army or diplomacy. God's saving presence would come in the form of a baby.

This prophecy was not fulfilled in Isaiah's lifetime, but at the time of Jesus Christ. Matthew affirmed that the great light God would provide His people was indeed Jesus, the royal child who was born to save His people (4:15-16).

Read Isaiah 9:4-5.

This coming victory Isaiah anticipated would be a mighty and grace-filled act of God. However, this wasn't all the people needed to understand about what would happen. The people of God had seen victories before, such as the one over the Midianites, only to see another oppressor rise to power soon after. Peace was always temporary. But the royal child would bring a different peace—a lasting one. After the victory He would secure the tools of war would be burned, implying they would no longer be needed. Everlasting peace had come.

Christ has provided us with peace within (Gal 5:22-23; Col 3:15), an internal peace of mind and heart we experience because of Him. Because we have received forgiveness, righteousness, and lives of meaning and purpose in Christ, we can cast aside anxiety, fear, and doubt and rest in Him. God never promised following Jesus would be easy, but He did promise His presence to guide, direct, and comfort us.

- **How has Christ brought peace within your life?**

Christ also provided us peace with others (Matt 5:9; Eph. 2:16). God designed humanity to live in unity and harmony, mirroring the relationship our Triune God also enjoys. But because of our sin, our relationships with one another have become strained and we experience all sorts of conflict. The gospel offers us the ability to experience healing in our relationships. Because of God's work in us and through us, we can live in peace with others—not the perfect peace that will come when sin is no more, but a shadow of that peace.

- **How has your relationship with Christ brought you peace with others?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who brought salvation to the world.

Isaiah 9

9:1-3. Isaiah began his prophecy and described a distressed, gloomy land identified by several geographical locations. "Zebulun" and "Naphtali" were two sons of Jacob, but after the conquest of Joshua, these names referred to territories that bordered one another in northern Israel. "The way of the sea," "the land east of the Jordan," and "Galilee of the nations" were ancient international highways between Egypt and Mesopotamia that ran through northern Israel (v. 1). "Galilee of the nations" is worth noting. Ancient Galilee was always filled with Gentiles because of these trading routes, which explains some of the disdain the Jewish leaders in Judea had for the Galileans. The people of Galilee were looked down on because of their frequent interactions with these Gentiles.

This region of northern Israel was distressed, in part because it had been humbled in former times. This likely refers to the attack of Tiglath-pileser III who had led the Assyrian army to destroy the region and exiled a portion of the people in 733 BC (2 Kings 15:29). Isaiah was writing to a people without hope; people who were subjugated by the mighty Assyrian army and had no ally capable of coming to their rescue. Or so they thought.

Isaiah used two metaphors to describe what this joy will be like when the people see the light—the birth of the royal child, Jesus (v. 3). He first compared this joy with the people's joy at harvest time. Harvest is the time to celebrate the fruitful gains from their sweaty labor. This was the purpose of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (Deut. 16:9-12). Harvest was the moment when what was hoped for—food to sustain them for the coming year—was realized. However, the history of ancient Israel is the history of battles and foreign invaders. Because of the numerous wars waged and the heavy tribute owed to foreign powers, the Israelites could not fully enjoy their crops at harvest. It was a bitter-sweet time for God's people. But the joy Isaiah showed here transcended the joy they were accustomed to experiencing every harvest. This was a jubilant and exuberant harvest that would come only after victory over Israel's foreign enemies, which leads to Isaiah's second picture of joy.

99 Essential Doctrines *(p. 32, DDG)*

Christ as King

God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

TEACHING PLAN

Most importantly, Christ has provided us with peace with God (Rom 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:18). The condition of our minds and hearts and our relationships with others matter to God—that is why Christ provides peace for each. However, the greatest peace Christ has brought is peace with the Father. Before we trusted in Christ, we were in hostility with God—open warfare with Him—because of our sin (Rom 5:6-11). We were in outright rebellion against our Creator and we were therefore under His wrath. But when Christ came, He put an end to the hostility by offering His life in our place as payment for the penalty due our sin. Because of Christ, we are forgiven and God's justice is satisfied. Now, in Him, we are no longer at odds with God; He has adopted us into His family as sons and daughters. This is the depth of the peace the Son of God brought.

- **Which type of peace Christ provided is most meaningful for you right now? Which do you feel like you need to rest in more?**

Read Isaiah 9:6-7.

In the first part of verse 6, Isaiah followed his description of the "child" with the term "son." These two descriptions—child and son—emphasize two aspects of the One to come. Isaiah's use of "child" reveals that the one to come would be physically born in the linage of King David and that His birth would be the ultimate fulfillment of the Immanuel sign (Isa. 7:14). In the second part of verse 6, Isaiah introduced four names to describe the royal child in greater detail: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. These four epithets express the central characteristics of the Messiah.

- **Which of the four names describing Jesus is most meaningful to you? Why?**

Because of these four names depicting who this royal son would be, the Son of God, Isaiah described that He would reign perfectly, with justice and righteousness. During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated His unsurpassed righteousness in His full obedience to the Father. Jesus lived without sin, perfectly obeyed the law, and yielded to His Father's will. But this righteousness is not external for the believer. We don't look only upon Jesus' righteousness as an example or pattern to follow or evidence we can trust our King. Instead, in the wondrous gospel transaction, Jesus has taken our sin and given us His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

- **Jesus' obedience isn't just an example for us; it changes us. How does this knowledge affect the way you respond to Him?**

Activity

Using the Leader Pack item for this session, ask students to identify some examples in the past year of ways God has been one or more of the following to them: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, or Prince of Peace.

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who brought salvation to the world.

Isaiah 9

9:6-7. The first epithet, Wonderful Counselor, may mean one who is "wonderful in counsel" (Isa. 28:29) or a planner "who has done wonderful things" (Isa. 25:1; 29:14). The term "wonderful" normally describes God Himself or God's miraculous deliverance or marvelous miracles in the Old Testament. "Counselor" is a word that primarily describes a planner or an advisor who provided the military strategies to a king in the battle narratives of the Old Testament (2 Sam. 15:12; 1 Chr. 26:14; 27:32-33; Prov. 11:14; 24:6). As Wonderful Counselor, Jesus the Messiah would perform the most extraordinary works in history: He was rejected and crucified, but resurrected through His victory over death and opened the only way for salvation for us.

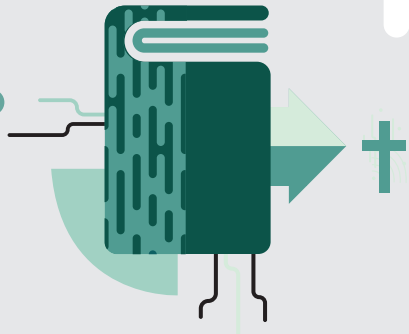
The second epithet is Mighty God. Jesus the Messiah is Mighty God, pointing us toward His divine nature. The powerful divine acts of Jesus have been clearly revealed through His miracles and proclamations during His earthly ministry. In the Gospels, Jesus performed numerous miracles by healing and feeding many people, expelling demons, and silencing the raging waves. In the Gospel of John, Jesus proclaimed His divinity by stating "I AM" seven times: I am the bread of life (John 6:35,41,48,51); I am the light of the world (John 8:12); I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7,9); I am the good shepherd (John 10:11,14); I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25); I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6); and I am the true vine (John 15:1,5). The Jews evidently understood what Jesus was saying here, because they took up stones to kill Him for making Himself equal with God (John 5:18).

The third epithet, Everlasting Father, means "father of eternity" or "father of ages." This title is quite similar to "Ancient of Days" in the Book of Daniel (7:9,13,22) and to "Alpha and Omega" in the Book of Revelation (1:8; 21:6; 22:13). In the ancient Near East, the term "father" was used of kings who needed to take care of their people. The Old Testament also calls the king of Israel a father of his people (Isa. 22:20-22). Although Jesus is not usually called "father," in His earthly ministry He functioned as a father who protected His people and led them to obey the commandments of God (Matt. 25:35-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28).

The final epithet is Prince of Peace. This phrase literally means that the Messiah is the One to bring peace to His people and the kingdom. The term "peace" is not used just to describe the absence of war in the Old Testament, rather, "peace" is a state of ultimate fullness of creation which reflects God's goodness. In other words, it is an eschatological state to be accomplished with the new heaven and earth.

(p. 34, DDG) Christ Connection

Jesus is the Prince of Peace of whom Isaiah and the other Old Testament prophets spoke. Through His sinless life, death, and resurrection, Jesus makes right what we made wrong because of sin.



THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Isaiah 9:1-7

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who brought salvation to the world.

JESUS CONNECTION

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LIFEWISE QUALITY

PATIENCE – Being willing to wait.

HEAD

What names did Isaiah use for the coming King?

How did Isaiah describe Jesus' future kingdom?

HEART

God's people waited for centuries for Jesus to come. Do you think prophecies like Isaiah's helped them have patience? Why or why not?

The Bible says that God always keeps His promises. How can this fact help you have patience even when things are hard right now?

HANDS

Having patience doesn't mean that waiting is easy or feels good. Think of someone you know who is waiting for something (good or hard). Write them a note this week to encourage them while they wait (or tell them in person, if you prefer).